

# **District Councillor Report for Totnes Town Council**

from Cllr Anna Presswell

26/11/2025

## **Long Marsh – additional bench at the furthest point toward Dartmouth**

Berry Pomeroy Parish Council have agreed on an additional bench at the end of Long Marsh. There is room for one more in the centre but still allowing movement in between each bench for wheelchair users. I'll be approaching South Hams to see if another bench is available or finance can be found to contribute. Seating at this location is often fully utilised especially in good weather – and it's not unusual to see people standing around taking in the view.



## **Quiet Fireworks**

In December I present a motion about introducing 'quiet fireworks'. This would be on District Council land where Firework displays are being planned – as well as a statement supporting the use of quiet fireworks throughout the South Hams area.

The most direct consequence of the explosions generated from traditional Fireworks are:

- Enormous stress, and in some cases deaths of animals, fearful and panicked by these explosions.
- Wild animals raising babies are known to abandon their dens in fear.
- Military Veterans suffering with varying degrees of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, are triggered by the explosions. Our Ukrainian and other refugees living in the area find the Firework explosions very uncomfortable having fled conflict zones. Two families have mentioned this to me first hand – and I also have had personal experience.

There are numerous injuries each year, because of fireworks. In 2024 the Childrens Burns Trust estimated that over 550 children under 16 attended A&E in the four weeks surrounding Bonfire Night.

Currently there are 17 charities that have formed the Fireworks Impact Coalition attempting to reduce the noise level from 120db to 90 db. Examples of noise levels are shown:

We all can relate to incidents of stressed, anxious animals that are within our families or know of pets in other homes where Fireworks night, New Years midnight, is a time of worry for animal owners. These days the 'celebrations' start earlier than the event by a week or more in some cases.

- **60 dB** normal conversation, dishwasher
- **80 dB** alarm clocks
- **90 dB** hair dryers
- **100 dB** MP3 player at full volume
- **110 dB** concerts (any music genre)
- **120 dB** jet planes at take off
- **130 dB** ambulances
- **140+ dB** gun shots, fireworks, custom car stereos at full volume

## **Bridgetown Alive**

Totnes wide there are 85 people on the waiting list for allotments, of which 25 are from Bridgetown. Totnes Allotment Association are at capacity with managing anymore allotment sites. The Totnes Community Allotments Association and Composting Group has been looking at options for more allotments and a composting site.

The Duke of Somerset has now offered the lease of a site for both composting and more allotments. It is in Weston Lane opposite the car park by Bridgetown Community Hall. Hopefully people close to the allotment site would be able to walk to the site, especially if sheds for tools etc were allowed. Some car trips would be inevitable, either with people who live further away, or occasionally to unload compost etc.

Bridgetown Alive does not have the capability to lease the site so it would need to be leased by a council. Composting is something that South Hams District Council could get involved in but allotments are a parish council responsibility. If this project was to go ahead, the parish council (which in this case is Berry Pomeroy) could lease the whole site from the Duke of Somerset and then sub-let the composting part to South Hams District Council. This could give them a small income to offset any maintenance costs.

At this stage, Berry Pomeroy Parish Council need to be asked if they would support exploring the possibility of leasing this site and their parish clerk has agreed to put it on the agenda of their January 2026 parish council meeting.

Cllr John Birch has already said that South Hams District Council would support acquiring a composting site. [REDACTED] is contacting [REDACTED] (a land management officer for the council) to discuss the suitability of the site on offer.

It's worth noting that the composting part of the site could go ahead without the allotments. If that happened, there would be no need to involve Berry Pomeroy Parish Council.

Further consideration would be:

Access, traffic issues, parking and practical things such as run-off into Weston Lane.

What format will the composting site take? Costings for composting bays, concrete hard-standing etc?

- Who would pay for this - Duke of Somerset or BPPC or someone else?
- Clarity on how composting site will be managed.
- Clarity on how allotments will be managed if Totnes Allotments Association are not prepared to do so. Who will manage allocation, waiting lists, plots falling into neglect if not cultivated etc?

Who will have public liability insurance for both composting and allotments in case of accidents.

## **Residents in Need**

I helped a resident get access to new kitchen appliances and an electrician, plus a review of her energy payments.

I write this to remind us of what is available as services to our town residents. A hidden number of residents are struggling with their energy bills, plus the expense of essential appliances in the home breaking down, and beyond that having new ones refitted, especially cookers that need to be connected to the electric supply.

**The Citizens Advice Bureau** were able to help with the finance for (in this case a Washing Machine that had not worked for years, and Cooker). The **South Dartmoor Community Energy Organisation** helped with organising an electrician (paid for) for the connection of the Cooker, plus establish a sensible energy payment each month. This resident was becoming completely overwhelmed and trying to save furiously while getting extremely cold in the house. She will be one of many so please engage with those who you may think need help.